

TWO CENTS.

FRIDAY MORNING.

TOPEKA, KANSAS, APRIL 9, 1897.

FRIDAY EVENING.

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ROGUES!

Most Shocking Disclosures Ever Known in History of Kansas.

Astonishing Charges of Secoundrelism and Venality.

L. D. Lewelling, at Present a Railroad Commissioner

AND ONCE A GOVERNOR,

Accused of Receiving Pay for His Vote and Influence.

Direct Charges Made With Dates and Amounts.

HANNA, OF HILL CITY,

A Republican Ex-Representative, Also Accused.

Charged That He Received \$1,000 to Lobby.

Easy to See Now Why Bills "Failed to Pass."

The revelations of betrayal of public trust, of sordidly transactions, of venality, of immoral character, of disreputable deals and official wickedness made by members of the legislature themselves before the bribery investigation committee now in session at the state house, have never been equalled in Kansas, if anywhere.

The last legislature, according to these witnesses, appears to have contained more than the usual number of scoundrels, and they proved an easy prey to the corporations and individuals who sought to purchase them.

Every question of the investigating committee uncovers lower and slier depths of corruption. The hoodlums, according to the testimony, is not confined to any one party. Members of both parties are involved. After concluding his testimony before the investigating committee yesterday afternoon, Representative Fairchild said:

"I want this statement to go into the record of this investigation. I appear before this committee as a voluntary witness and do not ask and will not receive a single cent for mileage or per diem. I suggest to this committee and under the resolution as passed that they have no power to either compel the attendance of witnesses or to enforce obedience to their orders. I would say further that the auditor of state cannot and ought not to pay a single dollar out of this fund for the purpose of his attendance in my opinion he and his bondsmen will be held responsible for the sums paid out."

"The only result of this investigation will be that innocent men will be brought here and their characters will be blackened, besmirched and ruined by incompetent testimony, far-fetched conclusions, hearsay and rumor. On the other hand, the guilty parties, because of the lack of power on the part of the committee, will escape. I make this suggestion for the reason that, had I done so before, the statement would have been made, if not by this committee, by some one else, that I did not desire to testify. However, I shall be in attendance as a voluntary witness, and any assistance that I will be able to render on the committee will be gladly done upon the request."

Harry Landis, witness of the state penitentiary, was the next witness. Asked what he knew with reference to alleged charges of bribery, he said: "One day Lot Ravenscroft, a member of the house, showed me a note which had been taken from a waste paper basket. It was a note addressed to the school book bill. There was no address upon it, and no signature. I do not remember the contents of the communication except that it said: 'Hold your horses in line.' It also contained the question, 'How about Rothwell?'"

"I have you any further information?"

A—None that I now recall.

Senator Householder hurriedly made a question and handed it to Mr. Snelling, who said:

Q—Is it true that a proposition was made to you, or have you any information made a proposition to the legislature to purchase additional coal lands for the penitentiary, to be followed by a division of the profits?

A—Yes, there was such a proposition made to me verbally.

Q—What was the proposition?

A—In substance as you have stated it.

Q—Tell us what it was.

A—That such a deal could be made if it could be made, and that there was necessity for the purchase of land.

Q—What did you say?

I did not see the necessity for additional land and did not believe that the legislature could be induced to buy it.

Q—What was said concerning the division of the profits?

A—Nothing that I remember.

Q—Tell us what was said to you.

A—I think the amount was \$25,000.

Q—Why do you not remember more clearly?

A—The principal reason is that I paid no attention to the matter. I did not believe that such a scheme could be carried out and I did not interest myself in it.

Q—Did you hear anything more after that?

A—No, sir, I did not.

Q—Who did you say it was made the proposition to?

A—I did not say.

Q—Why was the proposition made to you?

A—I presume because I was warden at the penitentiary and should know if there was really any necessity for additional land.

Q—Will you say who made the proposition?

A—I prefer not to.

Q—What is the pleasure of the committee?" said Mr. Snelling, addressing Chairman Outcalt.

"We desire the name of the man who made the proposition," was the reply.

Q—"Will you name the man?" continued Mr. Snelling.

A—L. D. Lewelling.

This statement caused every member of the committee to start, while a very perceptible appearance of surprise took possession of every man in the room. Senator Householder and Chairman Outcalt simply stared at Landis, who was immediately excused.

Representative W. M. Metzler of Shawnee county was the next witness.

Q—Do you know of any bribes being offered in either house or senate during the session?

A—A certain gentleman offered me something to vote against the Hackney amendment to the railroad bill.

Q—Who was it?

A—He said, "I will give you \$1,000 if you will vote against that bill."

Q—What did you do?

A—I said if I was worth anything, I was worth more than \$1,000.

Q—What did he say?

A—He went away, saying he would see about it, having first told me as we both lived in the short grass country, I might as well get something out of it.

Q—What did Hanna say when he returned?

A—He told me that they had enough money to buy the Hackney amendment and substitute the Harris senate bill. He also said that they did not need me, but that the amount for me would be made \$150.

Q—What did he say to him?

A—I told him that I had come to vote for a maximum bill, and proposed to do so.

Q—Did you take the money?

A—Yes, sir.

Q—Did you talk to Hanna again?

A—Yes, sir.

Q—What did he say?

A—"For God's sake don't say anything about it."

Q—Did you hear of any other negotiations?

A—Yes, sir.

Q—Of what character?

A—Similar to that which I experienced.

Q—With whom?

A—Representative Clark of Thomas county.

Q—He told you?

A—Yes, sir.

Q—What did he say?

A—That someone had offered him \$250 to vote against the maximum bill.

Q—Who made the offer?

After some hesitancy Mr. Metzler said that he had called on Mr. Smith of Sherman county, a member of the last legislature.

Representative Clark was next called.

Q—Do you know of any one who was offered money, or approached with or by other influences to vote against any bill?

A—No, sir.

Q—Do you know of any one who was intended to vote for a bill, and was approached by other influences to vote against it?

A—I know nothing except what Mr. Metzler has told you.

Q—Tell the committee of the conversation between yourself and Dr. Smith.

A—He called me out one day and we went to his committee room, where he asked me if I needed some money. I said yes. He then asked me how I felt about the railroad bill—the Brown bill. I told him I felt all right. He then told me that he would give me \$100 when I gave him my word to vote against the bill, and \$150, perhaps \$200, when the vote was delivered. He also transportation over all railroads.

Q—What railroad, did he say?

A—He did not name the roads.

Q—Did he say where he would get the money?

A—No, sir.

Q—Did he have any more conversation with Dr. Smith?

A—Yes, sir.

Q—What did he say?

A—He said not to mention it to anyone.

Q—How did you happen to tell this to Mr. Metzler?

A—When the railroad bill came up for final passage, some of the members accused each other of selling out, and I remarked that I believed that was true. I also said that they had attempted to bribe me and had probably attempted to do the same with other members.

Q—Have you any further information?

A—None that I care to tell.

Q—Did he then tell the committee which you have not told us of?

A—I was buttonholed by some persons in the postoffice.

Q—Will you tell us who those persons were?

A—No, sir.

Q—Who did they say to you?

A—Nothing further than they had understood Dr. Smith had offered me money, and that I had told it. I replied that I had not told it.

Q—Why will you not tell this man's name?

A—Because he is a friend of mine, and it would do the committee no good. Senator Householder made a determined effort to compel Mr. Clark to tell the name of his would-be benefactor, but was not successful.

Mr. Clark was then excused.

Senator Householder then called on the committee and the members held a hurried consultation after which Chairman Outcalt said:

"The examination of witnesses will be postponed until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock. The committee desires to hold an executive session."

The spectators and newspaper men retired and the committee discussed what action should be taken with reference to securing further testimony from Clark. They realized that if Clark's refusal to testify were permitted to pass over that other witnesses who might be summoned before the committee would refuse to tell what they knew and that the investigation would be a failure.

The committee and attorney general held a conference again last night.

THIS MORNING'S SESSION.

The legislative investigation of bribery and other charges of corruption resumed in the senate chamber this morning. Representative Ravenscraft is not sitting as a member of the committee, having declined to act in that capacity, preferring to come as a witness. He is the man who is supposed to have the "crisis" in his sleeve, and his testimony will be awaited with great interest.

Speaker Street was the first witness

this morning. Asked by Assistant Attorney General Snelling to tell what he knew about attempted bribery, he said:

"Sunday evening, February 14, while at the Dutton House, I received a telephone message from a friend, asking me to take supper with him. After we had supper he asked me to go and meet a party who lived in the city. We went to room 15, Vesle block. There I met a man named Harry Wilson, whom I have been informed was the agent for the American Book Company. The person who took me there left Wilson and myself together. After some preliminary discussion Wilson asked me what name of representatives had a rule requiring the votes of two-thirds of the members of the house to advance a bill. After he told him we had such a rule, he said it would apply it against the school book bill he would pay me \$1,000 in cash and \$2,500 if the bill was defeated. He went into an adjoining room and came back with a \$100 bill, which he placed in my lap. I told him I did not care for the money at that time, but would take it after under advisement. After a few desultory remarks, I left. I did not see him again, but received two or three notes from him. The last note I made up my mind. On the bottom of the last note I wrote him that I could be of no service to him and returned it. I have not seen him since."

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